

Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments
Appropriations Hearing
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Thursday, February 24th, 2022

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Pedro Montalvo and I am a registered voter in the City of Bridgeport. I am here to testify in regards to the governor's proposed budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

I am a member of Bridge House in Bridgeport. I feel that mental health services are in need of more funding for programs like these that help so many people. Without Bridge House I would not know where to go for help.

Many people with mental health conditions find themselves homeless. I was one of them. However, when I came to Bridge House the Housing Coordinator helped me find housing. He was very knowledgeable about housing availability, which programs would be applicable for me, and help me with the application process. I became housed between the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, and have been able to maintain my housing. This is just one way that Bridge House has impacted my life in a very significant way.

When I first became a member I worked in the snack bar and helped out in the kitchen. Shortly thereafter, I started working in the business unit, where I was first introduced to advocacy. I took an advocacy training held by the Keep the Promise Coalition. I began a member and eventually served as a member of the coalition's Coordinating Council. I have also served on the board of directors of the Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County, and on the board of directors at Bridge House. I am also now trained in doing renters rebate for other members.

As you can see, mental health programs that are funded by DMHAS can greatly change the quality of life for those who are in need of these services.

Thank you for reading my testimony.